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When We Were Little

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WHERE WE LIVED.

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE.

BY

MABEL S. EMERY.

With Illustrations by Edith N. Clark.

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IN MEMORY OF

"Prue,"

WHO WENT AWAY TO GROW UP IN

A BETTER COUNTRY,

THAT IS,

AN HEAVENLY,

THESE STORIES OF OLD TIMES ARE INSCRIBED.

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WHEN WE WERE LITTLE.

CHAPTER I.

WHERE WE LIVED.

THERE were four of us, — all girls, — Nancy and Bell and Pink and Prue. Nancy was three years older than I, and Pink and Prue were the twins. It was a large house in which we lived, and it stood quite by itself, with no near neighbors, behind a great pond. If you were coming to visit us, you would leave the city, with its noisy shops and factories and hurrying teams, and pass through pleasant open streets, with small fields and gardens and houses on either side, until you came to the edge of the pond. There you would find a little beach, all pebbly and clean, with the water lapping the smooth stones, and just beyond the beach a gate,

and very likely some boys fishing from the rocks near by. Sometimes they caught quite large fish, if they waited long enough. One of these boys would run to open the gate, and you would ride on, thinking you were certainly going straight into the woods that looked so thick and dark just ahead. But the road would go winding along beside the edge of the pond, until all at once it would lead you up around a small hill, and then you would see the house.

Our house stood half-way up a hill, thick woods close behind it and grassy fields in front, with the pond between us and the rest of the town. We could see houses on the farther side, and a dark church steeple standing out against the sky, and beyond that a little bit of the blue waters of the ocean, with white-sailed boats a long way off. Sometimes, when the kitchen clock stopped, mamma would say, "Now it is almost noon; run out and see who can hear the bells down town ringing for twelve o'clock, so I can set the clock just right." Then Nancy and I would go out, and perch on the stone wall beside

the driveway leading up to the door, and listen. And Pink and Prue would come following after (they were very little girls indeed; just big enough to run about and fall down, and pick themselves up again without making much fuss about it). And then we would all four sit on the wall, and swing our feet and listen. And by and by we would hear the whistle from one of the great mills, and then the different church-bells would begin to ring faintly and afar off, and we would scramble up as fast as ever we could, to see which would reach the house first.

Close behind the back door a high, steep bank ran up to the edge of the woods, and on this bank grew violets and small yellow flowers that we called baby-buttercups. It was a warm, sunny bank, even in winter; and once when we found the violets trying to come out and blossom before it was time for them, papa made little paper tents to put over the tiny plants every night, and keep them safe and warm. And so we had blue violets at the back door while the pond was still frozen over.

The room that we liked best of all in the house

was the playroom up in the attic. It was a big square room with a bare floor and two windows. Nancy and I could see through the lower panes, but Pink and Prue had to climb up in a chair when they wished to look out. There was a trundle-bed in one corner of the room, — a low bed with a sort of fence around the sides, so we should not roll out and bump our heads ; and all around the room we had our playthings just as we pleased, — the dolls and the tea-sets and the wooden blocks ; and the doll-houses made out of wooden boxes, and the little iron stove on which we played getting dinner. We did not have a real fire inside, but the things cooked just as well. And here, too, we used to play tag and puss-in-the-corner.

Nancy's doll was the largest ; she had real shoes and a black silk apron, and her name was Lily. Mine was named Jessie ; she had a china head, with blue eyes, and yellow hair in a net, and a big china feather on one side. She slept every night in a yellow wooden bedstead, with a patchwork spread of red-and-white calico. The bedstead was a little

too short, so that I had to double her legs under her body when I tucked her in.

When we went to bed ourselves, mamma used to tell us stories. She knew a great many; but the one we liked best was a piece of poetry about a little girl named Phœbe, who was very poor, and spilled her blackberries so that she could not buy a bonnet to wear to church. The story said that her father worked in a stall, so we supposed that he must have taken care of the horses; and we always thought the bonnet that the other girl gave her was a sun-bonnet such as we wore every day, with strings to tie and a cape of blue-and-white gingham sewed on behind.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT OUR DOGS.

PAPA was often away all day; Mike, the man who took care of the horses, had to go down town to his work, and mamma and Elizabeth and the four little girls were left at home. Then Lion took care of the family. Lion was a very large, shaggy, black dog, with white breast and paws, and a sober, honest face. If we went down by the pond to sail our boats, or over towards the hill to pick the yellow "wood-wax," Lion always went too, wagging his tail in the most friendly way, and watching to see that no harm happened to us. When night was coming on, Lion would go lie on the steps by the side door to guard the house; and at every strange sound down in the fields or about the barn, he would start up and growl, as if to say, "Keep off! Nobody shall come to hurt these people. I am taking care of them till the

master comes home." Then by and by there would be the sound of wheels and a horse's feet, and papa would come riding up the hill. And as soon as papa reached home Lion felt that everything was safe. Then he would leave his post on the doorsteps, and come in and take a nap on his favorite rug.

One winter day papa made a harness, so that Lion might draw Pink and Prue in their little sleigh. They thought it was great fun, and Lion liked it too; in fact, he liked it so well that he afterwards made us a great deal of trouble when we were out sliding, by coming up just as we were ready at the top of the hill, and standing directly in front of the sled, to beg us to harness him.

Buff was the other dog, — a little brown spaniel, with curly hair and long, soft ears. I shall never forget the dreadful time we had one day, when, just for fun, we put a cap of burdock-burrs on his head. It was easy enough to put the cap on, but it would not come off. The burrs stuck fast to the curly locks, and it was many a long day before we succeeded in picking them all out, and leaving the soft

ears as pretty as before. Prue had curly hair too; and she used to call Buff her brother. When Nancy and I were racing through the tall grass, and looked behind to see Pink and Prue and the two dogs following after, if we caught a glimpse of a curly head bobbing up in sight, we could not be sure at first whether it was Prue's, or only Buff's.

Old Lion took care of Buff as well as of us children. When he thought the little dog was really too silly with his jumping and barking and scampering, he would give one severe growl, to say, "Do try to behave better!" One day both dogs went into the kitchen, and saw a pair of chickens laid on a low table, ready to be cooked for dinner. Naughty Buff was going to steal one, and run away with it; but Lion lay down in front of the table, and would not let the saucy puppy take even one good smell of the tempting legs.

But when Lion was not close by to see that Buff did right, sad things happened. Mamma lost one of her best gloves; Elizabeth could not find the feather duster; and one of Pink's striped stockings was miss-

ing from the clothes-basket. At last something happened that was queerer than all the rest. I had a little wooden doll named Rose, whom I loved next to the china-headed Jessie. She was bought at a church fair, and wore a beautiful dress of pink tarletan. One morning I left her on a bench by the side door, while I went with Nancy and Pink and Prue to bury a little dead robin, down behind the barn; and when we came back, Rose was nowhere to be found. We hunted the whole house over; and mamma and Elizabeth searched too, but it was of no use. Rose was gone.

One day, ever so long afterwards, we saw Buff coming out from the hole under the back kitchen, where he loved to hide, carrying something in his mouth. We called him, and he came, waving his plaything in the air. And behold, — it was a feather from Elizabeth's duster, and the body of my dear Rose, her pretty petticoats all dirty and draggled and torn, and her round wooden head chewed completely off.

Once Lion and Buff did a fine thing, for which

they were praised and petted. Pink was lost. We called and shouted and looked for her in every place we could think of. Then we called the two dogs, and said, "Where is Pink? Go find Pink."

And very soon the big dog and the little dog were both out in the carriage-house barking for us to come. They had found Pink in the carryall fast asleep. She had climbed in to play "go to ride," and had taken a long nap instead, curled upon the back seat.

FOUR LITTLE FARMERS.

CHAPTER III.

FOUR LITTLE FARMERS.

DOWN in the field between our house and the pond, there was a deep hollow with steep sides. We called it the Sliding Bowl, because it was a fine place to slide in winter. If we started with our sleds from the top of one side, the sled would carry us not only to the bottom, but half-way up the other side as well.

In summer-time the whole slope was smooth and grassy. Down in the middle of the Bowl, Mike had cut out some square pieces of grassy turf to mend the bank about the house, and that left little brown fields of bare ground scattered here and there. "Let us have farms here, and raise pease and strawberries and roses," said Nancy, as we stood looking at them one day. That was a fine idea. We divided the spaces, and each had a little garden all by herself.

Elizabeth gave us some potatoes and beans and flower-seeds, and mamma provided some old spoons and dull knives for the digging. Then, of course, gardens must be watered, and we needed a well. Nancy ran up to the house and begged an old tin pail that was not good to use any longer in the kitchen. We dug a hole in the ground deep enough to let the pail sink down level with the earth, and then we smoothed the dirt up nicely around the edges. There was our well. When we wished to water the gardens, we carried a canful of water down from the house, and poured it into the well; then we tied a string to one of the dolls' pails, and let it carefully down into the well, filling it and drawing it up to sprinkle the young plants.

My pease grew beautifully: they were as tall as my arm before the summer ended; and Nancy's potato-plants were so stout and green that she felt very proud of them. Prue's potatoes did not succeed so well. Prue was a very neat little girl, and she wished to have everything done as nicely as possible; so before she planted her potatoes she washed and peeled

them very carefully, just as she had seen Elizabeth do in the kitchen. She expected a particularly fine crop, but, strangely enough, not one ever came up.

Farmers must raise hay as well as vegetables; so we cut large handfuls of grass with our rusty knives and spoons, and let it dry in the sun till it was brown and sweet. Mike gave us some old shingles, and with these we built four little barns to hold our harvest.

But all farmers have trouble. Sometimes the water ran out of a hole in the bottom of our well before we had drawn up all we needed, and then somebody must go away up to the house for more. And sometimes Lion and Buff would walk straight over our fields, and we had to scold them and drive them away. One day Lion wagged his tail so hard against my barn that he knocked it all down, and after that we played the two dogs were earthquakes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HORSE THAT WENT IN SWIMMING.

THERE were two horses in the barn, — one was Eldorado, a great, heavy cart-horse with big feet, and the other was Katy. We used to stand and watch Mike while he cleaned them, rubbing down their legs with a rough sort of brush made of iron bristles. Sometimes, when Mike felt very good-natured, he let us take turns in riding up and down the stable floor, while he held us on Eldorado's back. It seemed dreadfully high up in the air after we were fairly mounted, and the horse's back wobbled about as he walked; so, though we were always teasing for a chance to ride, we were glad to feel the firm grasp of Mike's big hand holding us on, and very willing to be jumped down to the floor when our turn was over.

Katy was the horse that papa drove when he went

down town. She was fond of apples and sugar, and she especially enjoyed wading in water. When we went to ride in the big carryall, our journey was oftenest to the seashore, where a long sandy beach stretched out for miles, and where we could pick up seaweed and shells, and little long-legged red crabs. Then, when we had filled our baskets, and climbed once more into the carryall, papa would drive Katy down to the water, so that tiny waves would break over the lower edge of the wheels. This delighted Katy. She loved to splash her feet in the water, and to feel the waves coming in around her ankles. Pink and Prue were sometimes afraid that the water would carry us off as if we were in a boat; but Katy had no fear at all, and papa always made her turn around and go back to the dry sand before she had waded too far.

One day papa was coming home from the factory with Katy and the open buggy. He rode up to the big gate beside the edge of our pond, and jumped out to speak a moment to Duxbury Sands, the man who lived in the house near the tall elm-tree. While

they talked Katy grew tired of waiting, and walked slowly down to the pebbly shore where she had often been driven in to drink.

"She is thirsty," thought papa. "Very well; she may wait upon herself if she likes," and he went on talking.

But Katy did not stop to drink. She waded in until the water was above her ankles, dragging the new buggy after her. She waded in farther, until the water reached her knees.

"Whoa, Katy!" called papa. "That is deep enough for a drink." But Katy calmly kept on.

"Whoa!" called papa and Duxbury Sands together; but the little brown horse would not listen. She went on and on, till the water was up to her neck, and then she began to swim like a dog.

Papa and Duxbury Sands ran to a boat that lay near by. There were no oars in it. What should they do now? But they pulled two rails off the fence, and paddled out after the runaway. By this time she had reached very deep water

indeed. A piece of iron that helped fasten the buggy together dropped out of its place, and the body of the wagon, together with the hind wheels, sank to the deep bottom of the pond, while Katy carried the shafts and the forward wheels along with her. Papa and Duxbury Sands rowed out beyond her, and finally made her go in towards the shore and climb up the bank, all dripping wet, with the two wheels following after.

"I never saw such a horse in all my life!" said the neighbor. "How do you suppose you will ever get your buggy again?"

They did find the wagon after an anxious search, —just where it dropped; and they pulled it up out of the water with long poles. Katy decided that going in swimming was not so nice as she had thought it would be, and ever afterwards she was quite willing to wait at the gate as long as any body desired.

CHAPTER V.

DOWN BY THE POND.

WE were quite small girls to be trusted near a pond; but Nancy was eight, and very wise, and we all knew that if ever we did really fall into the water, we should not be allowed to play there any more, so we were always very careful. In any case, nothing worse than getting our clothes wet could very well have happened, for Lion was always near by; and if we had fallen in he would have liked nothing better than pulling us out again safe and sound.

When we were starting for the shore to play, we took our boats and some ginger-snaps and a few of the smaller dolls. The boats were little flat pieces of wood, with one mast and a paper sail. First Nancy bored a hole with a gimlet in the middle of the flat slip of wood; then she whit-

tled a small, slender stick with our old knife, until one end would fit tightly into the hole. That was the mast. Then she cut a piece of newspaper as big as her hand, and fastened it to the boat by tearing three or four little holes in a row down the middle and running the mast through these holes, as a needle is run through a piece of cloth. And there was a fine boat all finished!

We went down the steep driveway, and across the road and through a field, with the two dogs following after, and presently we came to our favorite place along the shore. It was a little cove or bay where the water was always warm, and the shore was strewn with smooth pebbles, ready to build wharves and houses and walls around our harbors. Sometimes we put very small pebbles and grass and flowers on the flat boats for a cargo, and the smaller dolls went as passengers. We tied strings to the boats so that we could pull them in whenever we wished, and they could not sail out of reach. Sometimes they tipped over and spilled the cargo; but we had learned not to trust them with our

ginger-snaps, and if pebbles were lost overboard, there were plenty more to be had.

One day Nancy's biggest and finest boat had just sailed out of her harbor with Agnes for a passenger, when we heard Elizabeth ringing a bell to call us to the house.

"Agnes shall have a nice long sail while we are gone," said Nancy; and she tied the string to a bush beside the shore, leaving the little black-eyed doll lying on her back on deck, staring up at the sail.

But something happened after dinner so that we did not return to the pond that day; and when we went down the next morning, there was the boat sailing proudly at the end of the string, but no Agnes anywhere to be seen.

"Do you suppose she's drowned?" asked Prue. "And she had on her very best dress!"

But presently we saw Agnes lying on the bottom of the harbor, and looking up with her eyes wide open. We poked with a long stick, and finally we pulled her out. Her china head and arms and feet were not hurt a bit by soaking over night, but her

best dress was indeed a sorry sight, and as for her cloth body — it was all spotted with stains of mildew, like great gray freckles. She had another dress that very day, and Elizabeth dried her in the oven on a plate; but as long as she lived she never quite recovered from the mildew stains.

Another thing we liked down by the pond was playing in the little huts built by Duxbury Sands.

Duxbury Sands lived in the white house out by the street, near the gate and the pebbly beach and the tall elm-tree. He had a gun, and sometimes shot birds for the market. We used to suppose he was called "Duxbury" because he shot ducks. Wild ducks are very shy, and a hunter must take care to keep out of their sight, — so Mr. Sands had built low huts in two or three places along the pond shore in which he could hide with his gun. He could not stand up straight in them, but we were smaller, and the houses were just right to play in. They were built of rough boards and boughs of trees; each one had a door that would shut, and one tiny window in front looking out on the water. They made fine playhouses.

Sometimes we made believe the huts were forts. Then Pink and I were early settlers, and Nancy and Prue were wild Indians coming to attack us and carry us off for prisoners. Then we shut the door tight and stayed inside, with Lion wagging his tail beside us. Pretty soon we heard the Indians coming shouting outside; and Buff ran and barked and pawed at the door, and Nancy and Prue pretended to shoot arrows at us, and we tried to drive them away. And, finally, after we were taken prisoners, and led off with our hands tied together, we all sat down on the bank, Indians and settlers and dogs and all, and ate the ginger-snaps that Elizabeth gave us, and drank water from the pond out of clean blue clam-shells.

TAKING PRUE'S PICTURE.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN IT RAINED.

IN pleasant weather we played out-of-doors almost all the time, but now and then came long rainy days when we must stay in-doors and amuse ourselves in other ways.

Sometimes we played at having our pictures taken. We drew Pink's high-chair out into the middle of the room, and threw a red plaid shawl of Nancy's over the top of it, to look like a camera. Then Nancy played that I was an artist, and she was a grown-up lady, and Pink and Prue were her two little girls.

"Good-afternoon. I would like to have my children's pictures taken."

"Yes, ma'am. Tell your little girl to sit down there in that chair, and look straight at the clock."

Then I put my head in under the shawl, and peeped out through the back of the chair.

"Now sit very still till I tell you to move."

A slate and pencil lay ready on the seat of the chair, and while Prue sat waiting I drew her picture on the slate, and we played it was a photograph in a gilt frame. Then Pink and Nancy had to sit for their pictures too; and sometimes mamma and Elizabeth would take their turn with the rest. They always sat very still; but Pink used to laugh when she saw me looking out at her through the back of the chair, from under the red shawl.

Sometimes we made paper dolls. Papa gave us scraps of old letters and colored envelopes, and mamma found strips of gay wall-paper up in the storeroom, all covered with flowers and gilt figures, and most beautiful for party dresses. Sometimes we played school; or we went visiting with our big dolls. But best of all we loved our little china dolls and their wooden houses.

My doll-house was made of two old soap-boxes set up on their sides. One was a parlor and the other a bedroom. The parlor had a carpet of green paper with a little gold figure in it, and the walls

were papered in pink and white. On one side of the room papa had sawed out a window, and over this were draped curtains of white tissue paper. The furniture was made of iron, and painted blue and gold. Pictures cut from old magazines were pinned upon the walls, and one wee bit of a blue book, about half as long as your smallest finger, lay on the centre-table. The bedroom was made like the parlor, only smaller, and the bedstead had a real mattress and pillows, and sheets that tucked in. We had no lamps; but I used to take a pewter goblet from my tea-set, and set a big yellow marble on the top of the bowl, and it looked quite like a tall lamp all lighted. Our one stove was too big to go inside either room, so I never had a whole kitchen; but I used to set the dinner-table in the parlor, and draw up the little iron chairs for the two small dolls, Maud and Blanche. They lived on popcorn most of the time. Once in a while they had oyster-crackers, or a slice of an apple; and when papa brought home a box of figs we played Thanksgiving. A nice, plump fig looks very much like a stuffed and

roasted turkey when you pat it out smooth, and lay it all by itself on a doll's plate.

Nancy and I used to take our families visiting in each other's houses; and when we wished to give a very large party we invited all the paper dolls, as well as the china people. Then, as there was not room for everybody at the table at once, a part of the company had to wait, and it took a long time to serve them all. We found it a great care to keep house and give large parties.

CHAPTER VII.

SCHOOL, AND HOME AGAIN.

I NEVER knew just how or when I learned to read. Nancy could read, and I always wished to do whatever Nancy did, so in some way or other I very soon found out the names of the letters on our red and yellow wooden blocks, and after that it did not take long to spell out the short stories in "Mother Goose" and the "First Reader." Our "Mother Goose" was a dear old book. It had been bought for Nancy when she was a wee bit of a girl. It had pages of cloth instead of paper, and was full of pictures; but the picture that charmed me more than all the rest, showed a man with his mouth wide open, just about to swallow the tiny house of the "old woman called Nothing-at-all." I thought how nice it would be to have a doll-house like that, with a front door and a chimney.

But one must learn other lessons besides those in "Mother Goose," and, for a little while in the summer, Nancy and I went to school.

The school-house was a long way off, and our path lay through the fields beside the pond. We could never go when it had been raining, or when it looked as if it might be going to rain, or when there was to be a picnic, or when we had a headache, or when Elizabeth wanted some pease picked for dinner; so, on the whole, I am afraid we were not very punctual scholars. But, whenever we did go, we minded the rules, and learned our lessons, so the teachers were always very kind to us. There were two teachers in our school. Miss Laura, who heard the lessons of the very little folks, was tall and fair, and we were all very fond of her. Nancy's class was in charge of the short, black-eyed teacher, whom I did not know so well. I had a big card with the multiplication tables printed on it, and a slate, and a "Second Reader," and an arithmetic full of pictures of groups of boys and chickens and tops and roses and ships. The questions were all about the things in the pic-

tures. Every day Miss Laura gave the best children a little slip of white paper with "GOOD" written on it; and when one had twelve of these "Goods" she could give them back to the teacher, and receive a Reward-of-Merit in exchange, to be kept always. A Reward-of-Merit was a bright-colored card with a picture or a verse of poetry upon it, to show that we had done well at school; and down in the corner were written one's own name and the teacher's name, in most beautiful quirly handwriting, all shaded like a copy-book.

Sometimes, when I had read my lesson over and over, and could answer all the questions about the tops and the chickens, I used to sit and listen to the recitations of the big boys and girls who "parsed" and did long examples on the blackboard. They were very old and wise. I wondered if I could possibly ever learn to know as much as they did; and I thought their jokes and secrets were something to be greatly respected and envied. One of the largest girls wore a blue bow on the rubber comb that held her hair back: she was very pretty, and I

named my next new doll after her, because I thought Fanny was such a beautiful name.

The last thing at night we put our books and slates away in the big desks, and sat with our arms folded, while we sang the songs we had learned from our teachers. Then we filed out into the entries to put on our "things" and go home.

"Hurry up!" Nancy would cry, tying her Shaker-bonnet under her chin. "Come on! — I'm most starved." And then we scampered across the street, and through the Winchesters' backyard, and out through the long lane that led towards the pond. There was one very interesting place on the way; that was the arch at the foot of the hill.

This arch was a sort of tunnel or passage-way, where a brook ran under the road in the spring months. After warm weather came, the brook dried up, and disappeared, leaving a low, dark, walled passage, through which we could look from one side and see the light and the grass and bushes on the other side. The passage was as long as the width of the road, and not nearly high enough for us to stand up inside.

"I'm going to crawl through," said Nancy one day. "Do you dare?"

"I will, if you will," said Bell promptly. I could never bear to be outdone by Nancy, if the enterprise lay within my powers. So Nancy crawled through first, on her hands and knees, while I watched and waited, breathless, to see if anything happened to her. Then it was my turn. How I wished Nancy had not dared! It was dark in there, and the ground was rough and stony; and I was horribly afraid of meeting a snake where it would be impossible to run away. And what if a team should come driving along overhead, and crush the earth and stones down to bury me!

But no team came near, and no snakes appeared in sight. One little cold toad hopped over my hand, and he was even more frightened than I to meet a little girl crawling through his quiet, underground street.

"I never saw such acting children," said Elizabeth when we went up to the house. "Look at those new stockings — just one mess of holes and dirt! *I* think

they'd better be taught to walk on their feet on the top of the ground, instead of burrowing in holes like a woodchuck."

And mamma fully agreed with Elizabeth.

One of the nicest days at our school was Exhibition Day. Then the fathers and mothers came to visit school. The big boys borrowed chairs from a house near by for the visitors to sit in while we children sang and read and showed how fast we could reckon numbers. Miss Laura wore her prettiest white dress that day, and I carried a big bunch of roses for her desk.

Prue and Pink came visiting school that day with mamma, and sat on the platform at the end of the room. Nancy and I were so pleased when Miss Laura smiled at the twins, and said she hoped they would some time come to school too.

As for Prue and Pink, they did nothing but play school all the next week.

WHEN BELL WAS SICK.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEING SICK.

ONE morning Prue did not feel very well, and mamma said she must stay in bed all day. After breakfast she felt worse, and papa sent Mike down town for the doctor.

The doctor was a tall man with a gray beard and a very gruff bass voice. He came driving up the road in his covered buggy, and Nancy and Pink and I crowded to the sitting-room windows to see whether he brought any bottles of medicine.

"It's too bad Prue's sick," said Pink. "Now she can't have any dinner, and we're going to have a corn-starch pudding: Elizabeth said so."

It was many a long day before Prue had any pudding for dinner, and indeed many a day before we saw her again. She was taken into mamma's room, and we were all shut out. The doctor came

several times before she grew well enough to be dressed, and to have her breakfast carried up on a waiter. And then, just when Prue was ready to come down-stairs and play with us once more, it was I who woke up in the morning all hot and headache-y and miserable.

"Well," said Elizabeth, "I wouldn't worry. Children have to go through these things. And Prue wasn't so *very* sick, you know."

It was not half so interesting to be sick as I had imagined it would be. My throat hurt me; and when I was so warm it seemed as if I could drink a whole pitcher of ice-water, they made me keep even my arms all covered up tight in bed. I knew that Nancy was going down in the meadow for pussy-willows, and it was very forlorn to lie there in bed instead of racing off down in the meadow. Then the doctor came again, and looked at my tongue and felt of my wrist, and asked questions in his gruff voice of mamma as she stood by the bedside. And his medicines were sometimes very bad to take.

Mamma used to let me hold her watch while I

lay in bed. It was a beautiful watch, with a gold face on which was engraved a picture that I never tired of admiring. It represented a tall castle beside a lake, with mountains in the distance. When I held the watch so that the light fell on it in one particular way, all the picture looked bright and sunshiny, except the windows of the castle, which were quite shadowy and dark. And then I discovered that by turning the watch in another way the pictured lake and the mountains were made to grow dim, as if in twilight, while the castle windows shone as if the rooms inside were all ablaze with lighted lamps.

When I grew better, so that I could sit up in bed with pillows behind me, and have *my* breakfast brought up on a waiter, Nancy used to read me stories from our red-covered Fairy Book. And one day papa brought home two little parasols, just alike, for Nancy and me. They were of black silk, with long handles, hinged in the middle so that they could be folded up smaller still. It made me even more anxious to get well quickly, so that I might go out to walk with my beautiful parasol.

One day Nancy came home from school and said that the teacher had asked all the little girls to write compositions. I did not know what a composition was, but Nancy explained that it was just a story that we wrote ourselves; either a true story about something we had seen, or else a story made up out of our own heads. Mamma said I might write one too, if I liked, and send it to Miss Laura by Nancy. We had a fine time over it. Nancy took a big book in her lap for a desk, and I had mamma's little stand with the drawers in it for my desk, because I had been sick. Everybody was very good to me in those days. Nancy wrote about the picnic that we had on the twins' birthday, and I wrote about a fairy that lived in a hole in the ground. And after we had written our stories we made pictures to go with them. Nancy made a picture of us all eating our supper in the woods, and papa said when he came home that it was very nice. He knew which part of the picture was meant for him, because Nancy had drawn a moustache for him, and nobody else had a moustache.

When Nancy took my fairy story to school, Miss Laura wrote me a letter, and said she was glad I did it, and she hoped I would get well soon. I used to keep the letter in my upper bureau drawer in a blue box with a picture on the cover.

CHAPTER IX.

GOING TO CHURCH.

OUR church was too far away for a Sunday walk, and Pink and Prue were very little girls, — too small to sit still long, — so we did not all go to church. Nancy and I used to go, and we told Pink and Prue all about it when we got home.

Mike used to harness Katy into the carryall, and papa sat on the front seat to drive. Nancy and I used to take turns sitting on the front seat. It was very nice to help drive; but it was nice, too, on the back seat beside mamma. Mamma looked pretty every day in the week; but we specially liked to see her in the dress she wore Sundays, with lace about the neck, and a pink rose in her bonnet just the color of her cheeks.

We rode out through the gate and down the village street, while the church-bells were ringing and

people were coming out of their front gates carrying Bibles and hymn-books. Nancy and I used to make believe that the church-bells were talking, and saying to the people, "Come — come — come — Be good — be good — Come — come — come!"

Papa used to drive up to the steps of the church, and help us out; then he took Katy across the street and tied her in a shed. After he had seen that everything was safe, he came back, and we went in together. The first thing we saw when we walked up the aisle was a big window of pale rose-colored glass away up high in the wall over the pulpit. The window was shaped like a rose too. There were other windows of colored glass in the side walls, but none of them ever seemed to me as lovely as the pale rose-colored one up over the minister's head. The minister himself was a tall man with white hair. I could not always understand very well what he was talking about; but I knew that when he folded his hands on the big Bible and said, "Let us pray," that he was going to talk to Our Father, the same Father to whom we said our prayers at home. Mamma had

told us that if we liked we could say our own prayers then, so I used to say "Our Father who art in heaven" very softly to myself, and then sometimes make up another prayer of my own. And at the end the choir used to sing *Amen.*

Nancy liked the singing best. There was a choir in our church, but the people sang too; everybody sang. Sometimes, when the hymn was one of our favorites (we liked best "How firm a foundation," and one about

> — "the sweet fields of Eden,
> Where the tree of Life is blooming"),

mamma would smile, and bend down and say, "Not quite so loud, Nancy." There was a beautiful young lady who sat in the pew just in front; and she sang very loud indeed, but I think she did sing better than Nancy. She had curly brown hair, and she was our Sunday-school teacher. But Sunday-school did not come till after church.

Besides the prayer and the singing, the minister used to read out of the big Bible; and quite often he read stories we knew, — about the Prodigal Son, or the

Loaves and Fishes. Sometimes he read verses that we had learned in Sunday-school; and then we felt very grand, because we could repeat them softly to ourselves while he read. And then after a while came the long sermon. Mamma used to let us study our Sunday-school lessons again in sermon time if we did not whisper over them; and a part of the time we used to hunt in the New Testament for verses that we knew by heart. And I used to sit and watch the rose-colored window, and wonder how the minister ever learned so much.

There was another hymn after the sermon. Everybody stood up and sang; and then the minister stretched out his hands, and said another sort of short prayer. Mamma said it meant that we were to try to be good all the week, — grown-up people, and children, and all; and that the minister was sure God would love us and help us. And then the organist began to play again, and the gentlemen took up their canes and hats, and people began to shake hands with each other and go out.

Our Sunday-school in those days was not a very

large school, and we did not have a room of our own for our lessons. The different classes sat in pews down in the front of the church, close by the pulpit. There were five other little girls in the class with Nancy and me, and our teacher was the curly-haired young lady who sang so beautifully. She used to tell us a great many stories of Bible people and Bible times; and she often brought photographs and illustrated books to show us. I specially liked one picture of Jesus Christ when He was a little baby, in His mother's arms, and two fat little cherubs leaning on their elbows and thinking about Him. Nancy's favorite was the picture of a man, — a kind of soldier with a long spear, killing a dreadful animal with great teeth and a long tail. The animal was called a "dragon;" but our teacher said that there were really no such animals. Killing a dragon just meant overcoming some temptation to be naughty; and we could all be soldiers in that way, even while we were little girls. And she told us how Jesus came and lived in the world to show people how to be good; and she said that if we

ourselves tried faithfully to be good, we were helping Him, and pleasing God, and making the world a happier place for all boys and girls to live in.

When we rode home after Sunday-school, Pink and Prue always came part way down the road to meet us and tell us what they had been doing all the forenoon.

"We've had a good time too; haven't we, Prue?" Pink would say.

And Prue would say, "Yes. But I'd like to go to church too some time. We will when we're bigger, won't we, mamma?"

One Sunday the minister went home with us after church, and stayed to dinner. He had been a minister once in a far-away country, where there were tigers and elephants, and where it was one hot summer all the year round. He told us a great many stories about that queer country, and about the boys and girls who lived there, and their strange way of talking.

"But if they use such funny words to talk with, how does Our Father know what they mean when they say their prayers?" asked Bell.

But the minister said Our Father could understand everybody, no matter what words were said. All boys and girls were His children, whether they were white or yellow or black; and He took care of them all every day.

GRANDPA'S END OF THE TABLE.

CHAPTER X.

THANKSGIVING AT GRANDPA'S.

WE did not often enjoy a journey in the cars. When we went away from home at all it was usually in the big carryall, with Katy to take us down to the beach or through the green country roads. Our first experience of a long journey was when we went to spend Thanksgiving at grandpa's.

It was delightful to get ready for the visit. Miss Ball, the dressmaker, came to the house and worked for several days, finishing our winter clothes. She was a little, plump woman, with a round pincushion always dangling from her buttonhole. The pincushion looked just like a rubber ball, and it was by that we remembered her name.

At last the day came on which we were to start. We were so afraid we should be late at the station, and so miss the train! But there was just time

enough, and we all found seats close together in the cars. It was a long ride, and rather tiresome for the very little ones. Prue and Pink went to sleep after a while; but Nancy and I did not wish to lose any time in sleeping. We looked out of the window all the way, to see all the queer places and the pretty places, and the places where we should like to live. I was very eager to see just when we went from Massachusetts into New Hampshire. In my little geography, one State was colored pink, and the other yellow; and I supposed there would be a high fence between them, with a gate for the railroad train to pass through. Of course I learned better when I had travelled.

Uncle William and Joe were at the station to meet us. Cousin Joe was not much older than Nancy, but he could drive a horse all by himself. We rode up the long hill to the farmhouse; and Aunt Lina came out to the piazza door, rosy and smiling, with three more little cousins hovering near, and white-haired grandpa beaming at us from over Aunt Lina's shoulder.

"Now make yourselves at home, children," said Aunt Lina, after the families had been duly counted up and measured and compared, to see which of the cousins were taller or heavier or older. "Make yourselves at home, and have all the good times you can."

The first thing we eight children did was to play railroad out in the barn. It was a very long large barn, — bigger by far than any church we had ever seen. On either side of the open floor there were the horse-stalls and the "tie-up," where a dozen or twenty cows were fastened; and grain-bins and farm-machines and tool-boxes and many other things. And above, on either side, great heaps of sweet-smelling hay were piled away up to the dim, dusky roof, with its cobwebby rafters.

We named stations at different points along the sides of the open floor. An old "stone-drag" near the door was East Garrison, where our cousins lived. The first ladder leading to the hay-mow was Concord; the farther barn-doors answered for Manchester; the passage-way leading out into the cow-yard was

Nashua; and the harness-room, opposite the "drag," was Boston. Our railroad train was a pair of old wagon wheels with the shafts attached; and we took turns in being the locomotive to help pull the train along, tooting and whistling, while the rest of the party were passengers, and got on and off at the different stations along the way.

On the morning of Thanksgiving Day another uncle and aunt and two more cousins came to join the family party. Aunt Lina was busier and jollier than ever; there was a delicious smell of turkey in the air, and a long white table was set out in the big kitchen. Ten cousins in all, besides the grown-up people, — no wonder the two turkeys were so big, and the pies so many! Uncle John made a great many jokes, and kept everybody laughing; even sober grandpa forgot to finish his plum-pudding, as he listened to one of his son-in-law's funny stories. Prue and Cousin Annie had the wishbones.

Uncle John and his family lived only a few miles away, and they went home the next morning; but we stayed a whole week.

"To think these are all your children!" said grandpa to mamma when we came away. "How time flies! You must be sure to come up next summer."

When we were on the railroad train going home, Nancy and I sat in the last seat in the last car. It was more interesting than ever to watch the places that we passed, and see the railroad track, as we left it behind, bend around the curves of the river, or stretch swiftly away in the distance in long, long black lines, till at last the rails ran together in a sharp point. When we stopped at Nashua, papa said, "I will get out and buy some more cookies."

The bell rang before he had returned to the train. The cars began to move slowly, slowly. He would certainly be left behind. What could we do? The train was fairly in motion before he came hurrying out of the door of the restaurant with a paper bag in his hand. Then he began to run after us.

"Oh, I should *think* they might wait for him!" cried Nancy indignantly. And Prue began to cry, because she was afraid he would get lost, and we should never see him again. But papa had long legs,

and could run very fast. He was gaining; yes, — he had almost caught up with us. He ran still faster, and at last he seized hold of the rail beside the car steps, and pulled himself fairly upon the car platform outside our window.

"Here are your cookies, Prue," he said. "I guess they're good ones."

And so we all reached home safe and sound.

It was after dark when we rode up to the house at home. We could see the light of the big lamp in the sitting-room as we went up the hill. Lion was wagging his tail to tell us what good care he had taken of Elizabeth while we were away; and Buff was so glad to see us that he put his forepaws upon Prue's shoulders and licked her cheeks. The old gray cat was glad to see us, too, and came purring to rub against our ankles.

A great deal had happened while we were away. My white pullet had begun to lay eggs: Elizabeth had saved two beautiful clean eggs to show us. And Elizabeth had done more than that. She had made new winter dresses for our four best dolls. Elizabeth

could sew beautifully; and those little flannel dresses, trimmed with narrow braid, were just like real people's clothes.

It was delightful to go away, but it was almost nicer still to come home again.

CHAPTER XI.

NAUGHTY GIRLS.

I THINK on the whole we were fairly good children, but now and then we did have some foolish quarrel, or we got into some mischief. And those were sad times for everybody.

Nancy and I had great trials over our clothes. Nancy, especially, cared a great deal about pretty clothes, and thought it quite unkind in mamma not to let her wear her Sunday hat and bronze kid boots to school. Mamma said our every-day shoes were the best for school. And we wore long light calico aprons over our dresses. But we did hate those aprons!

Once mamma went away for a few days, and left us in Elizabeth's care. We got along pretty well until one morning Nancy and I took it into our heads to wear our best dresses to school that day. We talked it all over while we lay in bed, and decided that there

was no real reason why Elizabeth should not let us do it.

"Elizabeth need not be so fussy," said I. And Nancy said, "I am so tired of that horrid old pink gingham."

But when we asked leave, Elizabeth said, No, indeed; we were to put on the same clothes as usual, and be quick about it too.

Just before school-time we decided what we would do. We ran up to our room without saying a word to anybody else, and put on our pretty white muslins trimmed with narrow edging, and our bronze shoes, and our chip hats with daisies around the crowns. We slipped down-stairs when Elizabeth could not see us, and ran out at the side door to go to school. Prue and Pink were taking their dolls to ride up and down the driveway.

"O-o-o-oh! Is it Examination Day?" asked Prue. And Pink said, "I'm going to wear my best dress too."

"No, you can't," said Bell; "you're too little. We're the oldest, so we can. And mind you don't

tell Elizabeth: if you do, you sha'n't play with my tea-set ever again!"

We marched off to school feeling very grand and important. The other girls thought we looked very fine, and said they wished they could wear their best clothes to school too. But Miss Laura did not say anything about our fine clothes, as we had hoped she would. We both began to feel very sober as the forenoon went by. We knew we had been naughty, and it was not half so much fun as we supposed it would be. Harry Brown joggled Nancy's elbow as he went by her desk, without meaning to do it, and three great blots of black ink fell on the front of her white dress; and at recess, when we were trying to forget our troubles and have a good time playing with the others, I slipped and fell down, and tore a great piece of the ruffle from my skirt. Miss Laura pinned it up, and said she was sorry. We were sorry too. And when, after recess, it began to rain hard, we were so unhappy we could hardly keep from crying.

"I will lend you my other umbrella," said Miss Laura after school; and we were glad to take it and

save our hats. But the roads were muddy, and the grass in the long field was wet; and long before we reached the house our thin kid shoes were quite ruined.

"You deserve to be punished well," declared Elizabeth when she saw us. "Go straight up-stairs and take off those clothes, and put on your nightgowns and go to bed!" And we cried; but we had to do it.

When mamma came home she said she was sorry she could not trust big girls six and eight years old to do what they knew was right. That was pretty hard to bear. And that was not all. Because the white dresses and the bronze boots were spoiled, of course we had to wear our every-day dresses and shoes to church until it was time to put on our red plaids: there was no other way. And I think after that we were not quite so proud, or so fond of having our own way.

Pink and Prue always played together, and did the same things. If one was good, the other was usually good too; and if one did what she ought not

to do, the other was pretty sure to help in the mischief, and be sorry for it afterwards.

Their worst fault was meddling. Once they went to the closet where the medicines were kept, and saw a big bottle with a glass stopper. Pink, especially, always wanted to look at everything in a box or a bottle, though mamma had told us all never to touch anything whatever in that closet without leave.

"It must be cologne," said Pink. "The stopper is something like the one in the bottle on mamma's bureau. There is so much of it I do think I might have some on my handkerchief. I am going to take just a little."

"I am going to have some on my handkerchief too," said Prue.

She pulled out the stopper, and hurried to take a long sniff before Pink should have a chance.

Such a scream as went up from that closet! Mamma and Elizabeth and the washerwoman all came running to see what was the matter. The bottle did not hold cologne at all, but some queer, strong-smelling stuff that Elizabeth used for cleaning, and poor

Prue was choked by it. Then Pink was so frightened that she screamed too, louder than Prue, and fell off the chair where she was standing, bumping her head against the half-open door. Prue really felt quite sick, as well as a good deal frightened. They both wished they had done as they were told, and let the bottles alone.

Whenever we had done any of these naughty things, mamma used to tell us that we must listen closer to the little voice in our minds that told us not to do wrong. We knew very well what she meant. I know I often used to hear the voice, though I did not always mind it. I used to hear it often when the peach-trees were loaded with half-ripe peaches, which we were forbidden to touch. The hard green balls that fell on the ground under the trees were very tempting. I used to pick them up and feel of their velvety skins, and smell of them; and sometimes I thought, "I will eat just one. Nobody will know."

And then it seemed as if something said to me, "No, you must not do it. Mamma told you not to, and it would be very naughty."

Mamma said it was my conscience that told me not to do it. She said that conscience was another name for God's way of talking to us, and that if we wanted to grow up into good little women, we must listen to the voice and obey it. She said that grown-up people heard just such a voice talking to them, and that Jesus Christ Himself, who was our Elder Brother, heard it too. And He always obeyed it perfectly.

THE CAMP FIRE.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE WINTER-TIME.

WHEN the leaves were all gone from the trees about the house, and the sunset sky was dull and gray, and there was a shivering chill in the air, then Elizabeth said, "I do believe it is going to snow."

A snow-storm was a fine thing. Sometimes the big white flakes came sailing down very gently, and we ran out to the side door to catch them in our calico aprons, and see their tiny crosses and stars and wheels. Sometimes they came crowded so thick and fast that we could find no wheels and stars at all, — only whirling specks of white that made the air so thick we could no longer see the village across the pond, — not even by flattening our noses hard against the sitting-room windows. Then mamma let us set up our doll-houses around the great table in the din-

ing-room. And sometimes Elizabeth helped make molasses candy.

But when it cleared off the next morning, and the sunshine sparkled over white drifts, and the sleigh-bells jingled in the barn where Mike was harnessing Katy, then we expected a grand frolic. We squirmed into our cloaks, and tied on our hoods, and stamped into our long-legged boots, that were just like a boy's boots, and then, with scarfs and mittens, we were ready. It was a flying procession, with Nancy for leader. I came next, and Prue and Pink came trudging after as fast as their short legs and thick boots would carry them. We each had a sled. Nancy's was a large one named Hunter. It had been used a long time, and its paint was battered and worn, but it would go much faster than any of the others. Mine was a gay red sled with slender swans' necks curving up in front; that was the Hero. And Pink and Prue had their little sleigh, and a small brown sled named Kearsarge.

Once in a while, when papa went out with us, the sliding became something exciting. Then it was

that we started with papa on the Hunter; not all at once, but taking turns, — beginning at the top of the steep driveway opposite the side door, a place where we were never allowed to start by ourselves. Mamma came out to the door to see us off, and Elizabeth waved her towel from the kitchen window. One, two, *three!*

We whizzed down past the garden wall; we shot by the grape-vines and the four peach-trees; we turned the corner at the foot of the hill, holding our breath with excitement; and we went on and on down the smooth white road. No fear now of tipping over, or running off the wall or into the fence. Papa's long legs and stout arms were equal to every possible danger. If we shivered, it was never with cold or fear, only with delight.

"Now take me, papa," Prue would call, her golden-red curls all blown about her rosy face; and Pink would come trudging after, chubby and serene, always good-natured and contented to be the last on the programme. And Buff barked and pranced, and Lion stood around in the way, wagging his tail and begging to be harnessed to every sled he saw.

There was one particular winter adventure that I am sure we shall never forget. Nancy's birthday came just two days after Christmas; and one year, when the day came around, papa said we would celebrate it by having a picnic at Glen Rock.

It was a beautiful sunny winter day. The ground was all white with snow, but in the shelter of the deep woods it was cosey and warm. Papa and Mike carried heaps of carriage blankets and buffalo robes up through the woods to our favorite rock; and mamma and Elizabeth packed a big basketful of good things to eat.

"Now for a fire!" said papa.

Mike had brought an axe along with the other things, and it was not long before great dead tree branches came crashing to the ground. The snow was swept away from a space beside the great rock, and in a few minutes a heap of papers and twigs blazed briskly. Then bigger sticks were thrown on. The wood crackled and the red flames danced, and whenever a handful of pine needles was tossed into the blaze there was a fountain of tiny

sparks like fireworks. We poked sweet potatoes in to roast among the hot coals, and they were delicious to eat with the rest of our dinner. A big stick with a forked end was thrust into the ground, so that it leaned out over the fire, and on this mamma hung the tin pail of coffee. Never did anything taste so good as that December picnic dinner!

And the last of it was the best of it. Papa went back to the house for a little while, and he and Mike came back staggering under all the blankets and quilts and comfortables they could possibly carry.

"I—don't—know," said mamma. "Do you *really* suppose the children will not take cold?"

"We're going to stay all night! Hurrah!" cried Nancy the wise, dancing in her mittens and tall boots. And so we were.

Papa and Mike worked hard to build a hut out of trees and boughs, with the great gray rock for one side of the bedroom. The floor was all covered with buffalo robes and blankets. The walls

were all wadded and padded with comfortables and quilts. Mike thought we were dreadfully foolish. "Good-by, Mike," we called to him as he trudged off alone toward the house.

It grew dusky in the deep woods; and then it grew quite dark. The fire danced redder than ever, and through the tops of the tall trees we could see the stars dancing in the sky above. We roasted more potatoes in the hot coals, and toasted apples, each on the end of a long sharpened stick, and held close to the ruddy blaze. And we tried popping corn in the hot ashes. Then we sang all the songs we knew, and finally we crept in among the heaps of blankets, like little Indians. And the fire still flickered and flamed, and the stars looked down through the tall trees to see us asleep and dreaming.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW WE MOVED.

WE had supposed that we should always live in the big house near the woods and the pond; it was, therefore, a great surprise when papa asked us one day, how we would like to move away, and go to live in another house.

"And be down town, close to the stores and the cars?" asked Nancy.

"And have a little bit of a dooryard, and other folks living real near us?" asked Prue.

"*I'd* like to live next to a candy-store," said Pink.

Papa said it wasn't exactly "down town," — only part way. There were neighbors close by, and stores and schools, but yet there was a large yard ready for our playground. It was already decided; and the very next week Mike was to begin to move the furniture, with Eldorado and the big express-wagon.

Such fun as it was to see the carpets pulled up, and the curtains pulled down, and all the books piled into boxes! We helped stow away our playthings in other boxes; and we packed our dolls' trunks with the greatest care. I meant to carry Jessie in my arms all the way, so that her beautiful head should not get broken; and Jessie wore her cloak and bonnet a whole week, day and night, so as to be ready in season. Mike carried loads and loads of things away to the new house; and, meanwhile, we helped a little, and bothered a good deal, and asked all the questions we could think of, and a great many more than mamma and Elizabeth could find time to answer.

"Will Buff ride in the carryall when we go?" asked thoughtful Prue.

Now, that was a serious problem. Good old Lion was no longer with us. He had died in the spring, and was buried up in the woods, near Glen Rock. Buff was as happy and curly and silly as ever; but Buff was not fond of travelling. Once when he followed the carryall away out to the gate by the street and the pebbly beach, a great yellow ice-wagon

went rumbling by, and frightened him so that he put his tail between his legs, and ran home; and since that day he had never been away from home at all. How *could* we carry Buff?

"We will see about that by and by," said papa.

It was a fine, sunshiny day when we left the old house. Just as soon as we were out of our beds that morning, the bedsteads had been pulled to pieces, and sent off on the express-wagon; so it was high time we followed. The sound of our clattering feet echoed strangely through the bare, empty rooms; and, though we were so delighted, there was something very queer about the going away.

"I — I guess I'm — sort of — sick to my stomach," said Prue faintly. And I knew just the feeling she meant. It is something that grown-up people feel very often, as I have since found out, when they are ending pleasant times.

But the new home was so different and so interesting that we forgot the queer sickness. This other house stood on a village street, with a balcony before the sitting-room windows; two tall fir-trees grew in

front of the balcony, and a long, flower-bordered path led from the door down to the street. We took dinner at the house of one of our neighbors, — who lived across the street. A little girl named Minnie lived there, — a girl just about my own age, and we grew to be the best of friends. She had a large wax doll named Cora Belle, and a maltese cat called "Cap'n Parker."

It took several days to put all our carpets down, and arrange all the furniture and books and pictures in the new house. We spent the time running up and down stairs, dusting books, carrying hammers and screwdrivers to the people who needed them most, and planning where to keep our playthings. All this time Buff was staying all alone at the deserted house across the pond. Papa and Mike had both tried to coax him away, but he would not come. He must have been very unhappy, for he scarcely ate any of the bones Mike left for him; and Duxbury Sands said afterwards that he could hear the lonely little dog howling half the night.

So at last papa took a big box in the express-

wagon, and he and Mike went back once more to the old place. Mike caught Buff, and dropped him into the box, and papa nailed slats across the top, just like a chicken-coop; and so they came back with our old friend in his funny cage.

Of course the cage and the noisy journey made the poor little fellow more frightened than ever; and when he was first taken out of the box, it seemed as if he had forgotten us. But Nancy caught him, and Prue began to stroke him, and we all came to pet him, and call him a good dog; so, on the whole, he decided that he would not run back to keep house by himself, on the other side of the pond, but would stay and live with us in our new home.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CANDY WOMAN.

WE did not live next door to a candy shop, as Pink had hoped, but it was not far to Aunty Elder's; and there we went whenever we had a cent to spend.

Aunty Elder lived alone in a wee bit of a black house on the next street, — a house with a front entry and two small rooms. But Aunty Elder herself was by no means small; she was the biggest and stoutest and heaviest woman we had ever seen. When she walked across the floor the little house shook and trembled; and when she had a new dress it took the whole width of a strip of calico to make the back of the waist, between her shoulders. She kept different kinds of candy in the two drawers of a little table between the front windows; and a few pasteboard boxes piled upon the table held the rest of her sweet wares. When we went in to spend a cent or

two, she rose slowly from her rocking-chair, — she was so stout and heavy that it took her a good while to move, — and pulled out both table-drawers, and took the covers off all the boxes, before she said a word. She knew we would wish to see all the different kinds first.

Sometimes when we went in we found her taking a nap in the bedroom ; then, after whispering together by the half-open door, one of us would go in on tip-toe and pull her dress gently, to wake her up. She was always good-natured, and always let us take all the time we liked to decide about our purchases. When there are six or seven kinds of candy in sight, and only one cent to spend, it is a question that needs a great deal of thought.

One thing which she used to keep in the boxes has since gone out of fashion. It was a sort of sugar toy made in the form of some animal, — a dog, or kitten, or rabbit, — sitting or lying on a little square mat. I suppose these things could not have been really made to be eaten, for they were gayly colored, and they tasted more like chalk than anything else ;

but we used to think them quite beautiful. When we first bought them we always meant to keep them for play pets in the doll-houses; but after a while the dog would lose one paw, and the cat's tail would come off, and then we ate the rest to save it.

Aunty Elder often spoke to us about a son who went away out West years and years before. "I shall certainly have a letter from him next week," she would say. And then, when no letter came, she was still cheery and hopeful. "He must be very busy. But I am sure he will write before Christmas." No letter ever came; but we hope that she has found her absent son before now, and that he is good and she is happy. She was the most kindly soul alive, and she often gave us extra bits of molasses drops that had broken off in the table drawer.

PLAYING CINDERELLA.

CHAPTER XV.

FRIENDS AND HOLIDAYS.

THERE were several children living near our new home. Minnie was the one we liked best. She had black eyes, and could sing very nicely, and she took music lessons. When we children began to go to our new school, I was put into the class with Minnie, so we became closer friends than ever. She and I used to make up a great many plays, as we went to and from school or ran on errands.

One of our games was to make believe that we were grown up young ladies, and had fine-sounding names. She called me Ethelinda Percival, and I called her Isabella Montmorenci. We pretended that we always rode everywhere on horseback, and we used to carry little switches of goldenrod for riding-whips, tapping our petticoats elegantly as we galloped away down the street to the grocer's. Minnie's play-pony

was named Zephyr, and mine was named Hazel. It was all very real and delightful to us; and we used to think it was a great joke that nobody but ourselves could see our ponies as we cantered along, or could know that our names were Isabella and Ethelinda.

Then all one summer we did dressmaking for the fairies. We used to gather soft, velvety rose-petals, and bits of yellow buttercups, and strips of purple-and-white morning-glories, and pin them together with thorns. Then we carried the fairy gowns and laid them under a certain flat stone down behind the lilac-bushes. Whether the fairies ever found and wore them I am a little doubtful; but, at all events, they were sure to disappear after a little delay, and we made more to hide in the same place.

The best game of all was playing "Cinderella" on Saturday afternoons. Minnie was always with us on half-holidays, so there were five children to take part in acting out the old story. Minnie was always Cinderella, and Nancy was the Prince. I was the Stepmother, and Prue and Pink were the Proud Sisters.

Mamma let us take old shawls and long aprons to make long-trained gowns; and up in the garret was a queer pointed hat of gay-colored straw, which made the Prince look very fine indeed. We made up the talking as we went along, and grew quite skilful at it. Prue and Pink learned to "switch" their long skirts about very scornfully, and Cinderella cried as naturally as could be when I scolded her for letting the fire go out.

Nancy had to play two parts, and be the Fairy Godmother as well as the Prince. She comforted Cinderella very kindly after the rest of the family had gone off to the ball; and when she touched Cinderella's clothes with the end of the old feather duster, we all understood that they were changed by magic from rags into the most gorgeous satin dress with a train. Then the feather duster was dropped, and Nancy put on the pointed hat and the waterproof cape, and became the Prince at the ball.

Of course one must have music at a fairy ball. We had a little music-box that played "Hail Columbia" when one turned the crank; and somebody had

always to grind out the music while dancing. Prue especially liked to do that part, holding the little box up close to her ear. Sometimes her curls would get caught in the crank, and wind round and round in a dreadful snarl; and more than once a little curl that could not be unwound at all had to be cut off and left clinging to the slender handle.

So we danced to "Hail Columbia," and Cinderella pretended to lose her slipper, and the Prince found it. And by that time there was a rosy sunset in the sky opposite the balcony and the sitting-room window. The shawls were gathered up; the Proud Sisters became once more round-faced little girls in calico aprons, and Cinderella said, "My mother told me to come home at six o'clock." And the Prince and the Stepmother hop-skipped with her as far as the front gate.

Then Elizabeth called, "Come, children! Bell, you and Nancy may set up the chairs; and, Prue, run and tell papa that supper's all ready."

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